

PERSONA NON GRATA

i don't know whether it's because i was born
during the ration-coupon days
or whether it's because i was hungry a lot
in my one year at a boarding college
and while in graduate school
and after each of my divorces,

or maybe i just took literally
all that business about
the poor starving children in china,

but i cannot waste food
and i cannot stand to watch
anyone else waste it either.

there are no leftovers at any banquet i attend.
if it's fit for human consumption,
i'll consume it.
i eat as if i'm not quite sure
where my next meal is coming from
and, in fact, i'm not.

for your own piece of mind,
i suggest you do not invite me to your potlatch.

IZAAK, ARE YOU GRIEVING?

nearly every spring i go on a whale-watching cruise
and nearly every time i learn something
that i didn't know before.

this year i learned that some japanese fishermen
use cormorants as their tackle.
they put a loop around the cormorant's neck
and give it the old heave-ho.
it dives for a fish
and since, narrow beaked,
it has to return before eating,
they snatch the fish from the bird
as soon as it alights
and send the bird back on its sisyphean task.

what an exquisite sense of sportsmanship!
i can hardly wait to purchase my customized duck.
in the past, fishing always struck me
as too strenuous a pastime.